

Chestnut Hill, Mass., July 24, 1915.

Alexander Mackendrick, Esq.,
Secretary of the Massachusetts Single Tax League,
120 Boylston St., Boston, Mass.

My dear Mr. Mackendrick: My friend Mr. Burke tells me that you showed him my letter about the High School prize essays, and that he disagreed with me. He has argued the matter with me and only confirmed me in my opinion. I don't wish to be arrogant about this matter, but I am sure that only a person with some experience in teaching English composition to young persons is likely to appreciate the viciousness of the proposal to offer prizes for Single Tax essays in competition by high school pupils. I will not go over what I wrote in my earlier letter, but will add that all such proposals are apt to be a grave embarrassment to teachers, and to interfere seriously with the programmed of instruction in English composition, and art not to be acquired by hours of rummaging encyclopaedias, and other hours of writing ideas not the pupils' own, but by frequent writing upon familiar subjects of personal interest.

As to Single Tax debates, which the League decided against, those are admirable for the purpose. The Single Tax is a live question, thoroughly appropriate to debate, and a debate would much more widely call attention to the subject, for while few would actually participate many would hear the discussion. I believe it would be wise to prepare and offer to High School, a syllabus of argument on the Single Tax, together with a considerable list of books and pamphlets from which the students could get further information. As to the prizes, I think them gravely objectionable. The League can not stand for any except the highest ideals.

I'll come in and talk with you some afternoon.

Sincerely yours,

Edmund S. Villardighan